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FUGITIVE POEMS



BY
COL. THOS. J. EVANS

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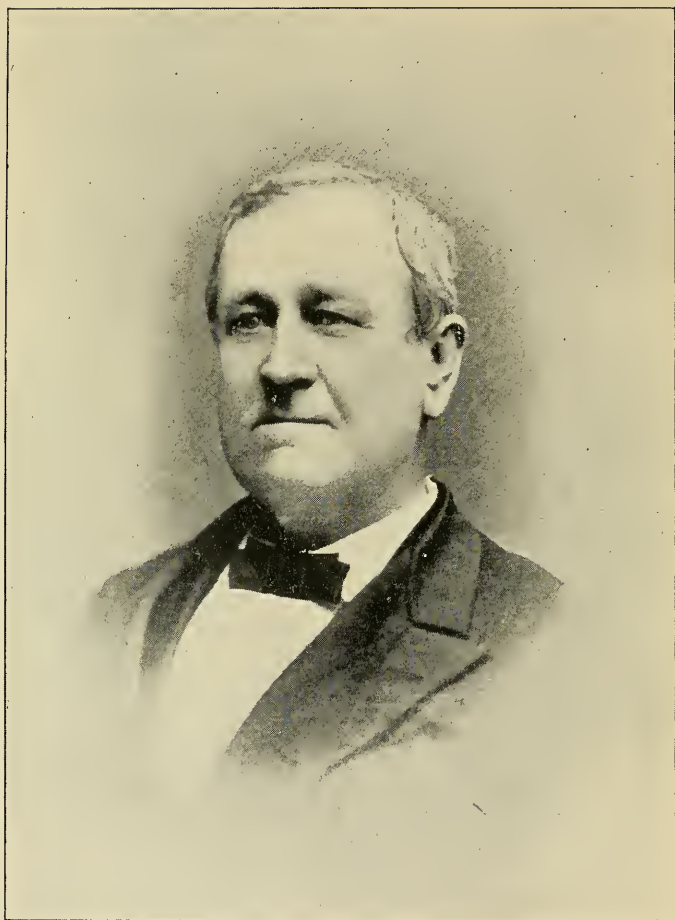
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SIR FRANCIS DRAKE,

AND

OTHER FUGITIVE POEMS.

BY

COL. THOS. J. EVANS.

11

Richmond, Va.:

WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, GENERAL PRINTERS.

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PREFACE.

IN presenting this little volume, I but carry out a suggestion which was, when he lived, urged upon my honored father by many of his friends and admirers. While it was never the intention of the author of these fragmentary verses that they should be placed in their present form, I indulge the hope that they will prove of more than passing interest to his friends and the public alike.

LOUISA EVANS.

Richmond, Va., June 15, 1895.

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COL. THOS. J. EVANS.

THOS. J. EVANS was born in King William county the 2d of February, 1822, and received his education at Rumford Academy and in Richmond, Va. Having arrived at the age to enter business life, he secured a place in the office of Mr. Robinson, Clerk of the General Court, in Richmond, Va.

After acquiring a valuable experience in the Clerk's office, he entered the law office of Mr. Samuel Taylor, and proved to be an apt and ready student. Upon entering into this profession deceased formed a partnership with Mr. Benjamin Tate.

In 1845 he married Miss Louisa A. Parker, daughter of Col. Stafford H. Parker, who was at

one time President *pro tem.* of the Virginia Senate, and for a long period Register of the Virginia Land Office. After the dissolution of the firm of Tate & Evans, he associated in the practice of the law with the late Alexander H. Sands, the firm-name being Sands & Evans, but the work of deceased's life was as Commissioner of Chancery, which position he filled with marked ability for thirty years.

At two different periods in the history of the city he was called upon by his fellow-citizens to serve them in the Virginia House of Delegates, and he was one of the most useful representatives Richmond ever had.

He was a well-known Mason; was Past Master of St. John's Lodge, No. 36; Past Eminent Commander of St. Andrew's Commandery Knights Templars.

Before and during the war deceased was Colonel of the Nineteenth Regiment of Virginia militia, a command composed of exempts from the active

military service of the Confederacy, but which was nevertheless almost constantly in the field around Richmond.

Col. Evans was at the time of his death the oldest member of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College. For a number of years, and up to the time of his death, he was one of the Board of the Male Orphan Asylum of Richmond. He was an Odd-Fellow of prominence, and was a past officer of Fitzhugh Lodge. He was a member of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues before the war, and was subsequently a member and ex-president of the Blues' Association.

As a public speaker Colonel Evans enjoyed a high reputation, and his services were in frequent demand. His rank in his profession was high and honorable. As a poet he had considerable talent. The friends he kept to the last. In the social circle he was delightful.

He was a true-hearted man. Duplicity and de-

ceit found no favor in his eyes and had no place in his heart. He was a loving and tender husband and father, a friend rich in affection, a citizen who served his city and State loyally and freely.

FUGITIVE POEMS.

Welcome to De Molay.

A committee of three from De Molay Commandery of Boston visited Richmond, Va., in April, 1881, to complete arrangements for a pilgrimage of their Commandery to the City of Seven Hills. At a banquet given in their honor, Col. Thos. J. Evans delivered the following original poem:

WE live in the South, where the sun rules the
day,

A pillar of beauty, effulgent each ray—

A halo of glory encircles his brow,

At his rising and setting the earth makes a bow.

We live in a land where the mocking bird sings,

And the butterfly spreads to the sun her bright
wings;

Where the peach blossom opens its beautiful eyes
Ere the spring-time has come, or cold winter
dies ;

Where in forests the fragrant magnolia grows,
The cactus, pomegranate, the orange, the rose ;
Where the melon is perfect in flavor and size,
A charm to the taste, a delight to the eyes ;
Where the small foot of woman treads lightly the
earth,

Giving proof of her breeding and excellent birth ;
Where men are as proud as the proudest of
kings,

And many as poor as the poorest of things,
Yet ready to share the last crumb with a friend,
And stand by his side in a fight to the end.

I saw a lamb the other day
Skipping o'er the lawn in play,
And it did gently, meekly say,
Bring from Boston De Molay.

Upon a tree not far away
There sat a bird; it was the jay;
I listened and I heard him say,
Bring from Boston De Molay.

Close by the tree there ran a brook;
It had a merry, happy look,
And as it threw its snowy spray
Against a rock right in its way,
In sounds of music it did say,
Bring here the Knights of De Molay.

Across the brook a horse did stray,
Along a field well set with hay;
He turned and looked, and then did neigh,
By which he plainly meant to say,
Saddle me for De Molay.

Beasts and birds and streams unite
In urging Richmond to invite

The Boston Knights to come and see
Virginia hospitality.

We will not promise overmuch,
Such as we have, we'll give you such;
Will try to make you feel as free
As those who meet and do agree.

We'll take you to the outer lines,
And there you'll see the Seven Pines;
And then we'll show you, if you will,
The top of famous Malvern Hill,
And take a peep at Gaines's Mill.

We'll take you sailing on the Jeems,
So crooked that it often seems
In going to its mouth
To be in doubt how to get out—
By east, west, north or south.

Dutch Gap you must not fail to see;
It was commenced by General B.;
Projected for the ends of war,
Completed under peace and law.

We want you to come; though humble our home,
Our tongues and our hearts say to De Molay,
come;

The Sir Knights of Richmond with emphasis say
They wait with impatience the long-looked-for day
When the Sir Knights of Boston shall be our
guests,

And we shall establish by unfailing tests,
That we still recollect with unspeakable joy,
How you every delicate art did employ
To make us the happiest men in the world,
When, six years ago, our banners unfurled,
Were cheered by the people of Boston.

The Immortal Six.

SIR Knights and Brothers,
With the season I greet you. A happy New
Year!

A pocket full of money and a barrel full of beer!

“What cheer!”

A cheek without a blush, an eye without a tear;
A life without a doubt—its end without a fear;
And when you cross the river, may the shadow of
the trees

Forever keep you cool. Be yours the gentle breeze,
And a full supply of *water* be ever at your hand—
This wish is well intended. Do you fully under-
stand?

If not, go ask of White. He can and will explain.
He's very fond of water, the fishing streams of
Maine—

He is a jolly fellow; a splendid fellow, he!
A better fellow Richmond boys will never meet or
see.

Kiss him for the Richmond boys,
Kiss his classic mouth;
His heart is just as big and warm as any in the
South.

John Heathcote, with his quiet smile, we never
shall forget;

With all of us a favorite, with most of us a
pet.

Send us a dozen locks of hair right off the head of
Rhodes,

The boys send lots of love to him—indeed, they
send dead loads.

Colossus he, in all that's good, and pleasant all
his modes;

A refuge for the troubled *craft*:

We call him Hampton Roads.

George Burnham, with his countenance as open as
the day,

The boys all talk so much of him,

I don't know what they say ;

But this I know, they never say a word but in his
praise.

Long may he live and prosper too, in all his works
and ways.

And Walker, with his honest face, a mirror of the
truth.

Like Washington, he never lied, not even in his
youth ;

Companion true ! Zerubbabel ! he never will reveal
A secret which has stamped on it the virtue of
"the seal."

Heathcote, Burnham, Rhodes and White,

Arnold, Walker, six

Cherished names with Richmond Knights!—

Who cares for politics ?

Richmond, Va., Jan. 1, 1882.

Phœbus and the Fat Lady.

SCENE—*Office Hygeia Hotel, Old Point, Virginia. Present :
Phœbus and three clerks.*

Enter Fat Lady.

FAT LADY : Proprietor, I came to say
I've packed my trunk to go away.

PHŒBUS : My dearest madam, don't say so ;
I hope sincerely you'll not go.
Your company is prized by all—
The old, the young, the great, the small.
Pray, what's the matter? Tell me quick,
Bad news from home? Or, are you sick?

FAT LADY : Not that, sir; nothing like it. No!
But you have cheated, fooled me so.

PHŒBUS : Pray, how and when was all that done ?
Such treatment I extend to none.

FAT LADY : You put me in that horrid room,
Fit only for a nurse or groom,
Fronting on the laundry's steam,
And where mosquitos daily seem
To congregate each morn and night.
Look at my hands—see, what a sight!
And where no breath of air is felt ;
This is the way with which I'm dealt.
You promised in a day or more,
To give me Forty-two or Four.
As yet you have not kept your word ;
Such falsehood I have never heard.

PHŒBUS : My dearest madam, Forty-seven
Is held to be a very heaven.
I'm sorry it don't suit you, yet
Be patient, I will try to get

A room to suit you to a T,
 All fronting right out on the sea,
 Where breeze from north, south, east,
 and west
 Will fan you while you take your rest:
 From which you'll see all ships and boats,
 And every craft that by us floats—
 Capes Charles and Henry, Ocean View,
 The Rip-Raps and the lighthouse too.
 I cannot give you Forty-two;
 That's occupied by Mr. Drew.
 Nor can I give you Forty-four;
 That's been engaged by Mrs. Moore.
 Now I have it. Thirty-nine
 Is empty. It is very fine.
 'Twill please you. Yes, I know you'll like it.
 You are very lucky now to strike it.

FAT LADY: You want to give me *Thirty-nine*?
 You cross of fox and beast canine!

That's just what *you* ought to have had
Repeatedly when but a lad.
And now, for all your manhood's lies,
Concealed with thin apologies,
You should be thrown into the sea
And drowned! you prince of perfidy!

PHÆBUS: Excuse me, madam. Long debates
Grow into quarrels, strifes, and hates.
The boat will leave the wharf at eight,
And take you to your native State,
Where you can scold, and fret, and swear,
And rave, and rant, and pull your hair;
But leave me here, in peace and rest,
With those who always do their best
To be content with what they find
When seeking rest for body—mind.

[*Exeunt Phæbus and the Fat Lady in different directions.*]

A Patriotic Piece.

At a banquet given to the Pennsylvania members of the Legislature and the Grand Army of the Republic, visitors to Richmond, Va., Col. Thos. J. Evans, one of the speakers, concluded his speech of welcome with the following lines:

WE hail your visit as the sign
That *now* there is no battle line
Between us drawn in human blood
Poured out in torrents, like a flood.

The fight is o'er; so let it be.
Our cause was lost when General Lee
Surrendered, with his gallant men,
And then declared and promised then,
To keep the peace, and silence too,
With North and East, with West and you.
He did not go on bended knees,
A tyrant's anger to appease;

Nor was he asked by you to yield
In *such* a way, upon the field
Which you had won and we had lost
At mighty sacrifice and cost.

We've tried our plighted faith to keep,
To bury down, far down and deep,
All bitter memories of the past;
To raise up to the topmost mast
The Stars and Stripes, the flag of old,
Which should Americans enfold
In love, and hope, and union.

We held that our cause was right;
You viewed it in a different light;
And so it ended in a fight
Displaying courage, skill, and might.
And now the cruel war is o'er,
Let's love each other but the more;

And let us take each other's hand,
And by each other proudly stand—
Joint owners of this goodly land
Of equal rights and freedom!

"Chicken fixin's."

A T midnight in his latticed coop,
The cock was dreaming of the hour,
When other cocks their tails should droop
And tremble at his power.
In dreams o'er hill and dale he wore
The plumage of a conqueror;
Now roamed abroad, with head erect,
And all the little chickens pecked,
While scattered round him on the hill,
His gaudy harem, loud and shrill,
His crow of triumph heard.

An hour passed by—old Shanghai woke,
That bright dream was his last;
He woke to hear the housewife shriek,
"The Baptists come! this week! this week!"

He woke to die, midst flame and smoke—
Be harikaried—put to soak—
Be hashed up by the kitchen folk—

With many savory "mixin's";
And when to-morrow's sun shall shine,
The hungry delegates shall dine
Upon his "chicken fixin's."

Poor Shanghai! with the martyred brave,
Corn-fed and nurtured in thy prime,
Rest thee! there is no holier grave—
No nobler fate than thine.
The saints who feed upon thy flesh
Will ever keep thy mem'ry fresh;
Nor lisp thy name without a sigh,
For thou art Fame's through coming years,
One of the immortal chanticleers,
Born for the church to fry.

He Chastens in Kindness.

SAD tears I shed when father died,
But they were childhood's tears—
With dread I looked upon the grave,
But they were childish fears.

A little while, and mother too
Was buried by his side ;
And, though a boy, I wished that I,
Instead of her, had died.

A few years more, and wife and child
Both in one coffin lay ;
With grief and sorrow I was wild—
That was my darkest day.

I felt that God was mad with me,
Thus to bereave and curse.
The sun went down upon my wrath,
And daily I grew worse.

Oh! great mistake! I knew not then
What now I full well know,
That God in kindness chastens men,
Kings, peasants, high and low.

Sunbeams and Shadows.

THERE'S not a heart that beats with life,
But knows its peace, but has its strife;
But has its shadows of the night,
Its sunbeams too, its morning light.
Yes, every heart, the false, the true,
Has shadows and its sunbeams, too.

Advice to a Bachelor.

M^{AN} was not made to live alone
In this rough world of ours,
This truth is clearly, plainly shown
By beasts and birds and flowers;
In droves and herds they roam the field,
In flocks they move through air;
In clumps and bunches perfume yield—
In each we find *the pair*.

Learn then without delay, this truth;
And act without delay—
Waste not the vigor of your youth;
December follows May.

And so life's winter soon will come—
How dreary! ah, how cold!
Unless you have a wife at home,
You'll need her when you're old.

December 26, 1865.

Napoleon at St. Helena.

SAD scene of human glory! how changed is all!
A year ago how great! ah, now how small!

Once, at his coming, monarchs, filled with fright,
Fled before his march or yielded to his might.
Thrones were only toys for him, and crowns
Brightened in his smiles, crumbled 'neath his
frowns.

Scarce one campaign was ended, peace restored,
And ere his soldiers had put off their sword,
And long before the wounds of all were healed,
His war-trump called them to another field.
Scarce had the roar of cannon ceased to sound,
The din of war been hushed to calm repose:

Scarce were the heads of fallen heroes cold,
And ere their graves were tufted o'er with
green ;
Scarce soothed the widow's grief, and stopped her
tears,
And orphans' cries no longer pained the ear,
Before Napoleon, on his bloody car,
Rode forth to curse some other land with war.
The victor of a hundred fields was he,
All Europe quite enslaved while he was free.
Now, the humblest subject of the British realm
Has far more liberty than he. The helm
Of that proud ship which he was wont to
guide
Through seas of blood to gratify his pride,
Is wrested from his hand. His ship is sunk.
His tree of glory but a shattered trunk,
So scathed by Europe's joint and fatal blow,
That from its scorched remains no branch can
grow.

Upon the issue of a single day
He staked his all, and left the world to say
Just this : Blucher came, and then Napoleon fell
To rise no more. The tale's too sad to tell.

The Falling Leaf.

Lines suggested by the falling of the first leaf from a tree.
(August, 1865.)

THE first to fall! The others all were green.
A tender leaf it was, and very pale,
Though not dried up, nor crisp by sun or storm.
It grew upon the topmost bough, and held,
As it deserved, high rank among its fellows.
Its early promise was as bright and fair
For health and life as any on the tree.
But soon, ah, very soon! the hidden seed
Of some unknown disease, in secret sown,
And by some hand unseen, began to show
The work of death begun, and told too plain,
That in a week or two at most, that leaf
Must fall—must from its parent stem be torn,
And to its mother earth return. It fell

As softly as a flake of snow would fall
Upon a new-made bed of snow at night.
In silence sad it passed its sister leaves;
They sweetly kissed it in its passage down,
And bowed a last farewell. And as they bowed,
The gathered dew, distilled the night before,
Came trickling down in shining drops, as pure
As angel tears. These are the tears of leaves,
Let fall to soften and enrich their bed,
On which they too must soon lie down beside
The falling-first—the pioneer to death.

'Tis not alone the willow tree that weeps,

Others there are among the trees that weep.

No biting frost had ever blanched this leaf;
No chilling wind had ever pierced it through;
No cause could be discerned why it should fall
So soon. (Death's cause is often hid!) It fell,
But yet so gently, through its fellow leaves
No rustling noise was made. They served to break
Its fall and kindly hand it down to earth,

Upon whose breast a bed of velvet green
Was spread, just suited to receive the child—
Such as a mother's hand, and hers alone,
Knows how to spread for those she loves so well.

So, prematurely, falls full many a youth.
Unlike the leaf, the youth must rise again
To live through an eternity of bliss,
Or else through endless woe. 'Tis by man's fruits
That man is to be *known*; and man is *saved*
By *His* rich fruits who hanged upon a tree.

The Misanthrope.

SELFISH, fretful, peevish, proud ;
Sometimes silent, seldom loud ;
Always angry, never kind,
Sees all faults, to good deeds blind ;
Hears all slander, and believes
That every man his friend deceives ;
Thinks that truth is scarcer far
Than gold extracted from a star ;
That virtue is not oftener met
Than drops from clouds that do not wet ;
That friendship is not oftener found
Than pearls upon the barren ground ;
That honor has no place of rest
Within the wicked human breast ;
That honesty 'twixt man and man
Was never known since time began ;
That wives may do for knaves and fools,

That children should be thrown in pools
And drowned before they ope their eyes
To all the world's deceits and lies.
"Religion!" to himself, says he,
"Grand system of hypocrisy!
A faith which many men profess,
A practice which no men possess."
When lying on his dying bed,
With aching heart and burning head,
He whispered, yet 'twas heard; he said:
"I never knew but one true man,
 (Of woman, never one)
Alone his race on earth he ran,
 And his is nearly run."

The Last Leaf.

THE last to fall! I took it for a bird
Perched high upon the very crowning bough
Of that old oak, and, eager for the sport,
I took my gun from o'er the passage door,
Then closely crept beside the chestnut fence
That ran along the margin of the field,
Till well within the range at which my gun
Was sure to take effect if rightly aimed.
The trusty piece was to the shoulder brought,
The barrel leveled, and the aim was taken—
When, lo! a leaf, and not a bird, was seen.

The Old Maid's Soliloquy.

HERE I've been waiting for forty-three years,
Sometimes in smiles, and sometimes in
tears ;

Sometimes in white, and sometimes in red,
With hair growing long, then close to my head ;
Sometimes with ear-rings as long as my arm,
Attached to my belt has been many a charm ;
On each finger a ring, with diamonds some set,
With breastpins of gold, the handsomest jet.
And with all these attractions, oh, horror ! as yet
No man has proposed. I've a good right to fret.
I have seen other girls, not so pretty as I,
With teeth from the dentist, one with a glass eye,
Have beaux by the dozen, and, better than all,
A husband to come at her beck and her call.
And still here am I, all alone in the world,
My hair has grown grey—too thin to be curled.

And now that the Yankees are killing the men,
When shall I get married? Ah! echo says, when?
Who'll give me an answer? Oh! for some kind
friend

To give me encouragement unto the end,
And assure me that, though I've long been de-
layed,

I shall yet have a husband, not die an old maid.

COLE'S FERRY, *September 4, 1862.*

An Enigma.

I AM a curious one, very hard to find out ;
I never was seen with papa ;
And strange as it seems, yet 'tis true, beyond
doubt,
I never was known to mama.
Though I dwell in the fields, am not seen in the
wood,
I prefer the sweet shade to the sun ;
I can live in the stream, yet would die in the
flood,
Am not seen in a walk or a run.
Though the first of the earth, I'm the last of the
race
To be found with the wicked and great.
I go with the vilest, share in their disgrace,
Their poverty, misery, and fate.

And yet I have always kept company, too,
With the wisest and best of the land,
The honest, the prudent, the brave, and the true,
Men fit for the highest command.

May, 1863.

Impromptu to Miss Mary Page Lewis.

MISS MARY PAGE is just the age
To fall in love sincerely,
And just the size, with winning eyes,
To be beloved most dearly.
She's just twice eight, the sweetest state
Known to the maiden youth,
With ready smile, devoid of guile,
All full of hope and truth.
A few more years, with all their cares,
Will find her some one's wife ;
A little chap about her lap,
The pride of all her life.
In two years more, if not before,
A girl will crown her labors ;
The praise of this sweet little miss
Will spread among the neighbors.

Ah! but this miss, with smile and kiss,
Some evil will betoken;
Her brother's nose, by several blows,
Too surely will be broken.

July, 1862.

Impromptu to Mary Savage.

MISS MARY, you must change your name ;
Indeed, it is a burning shame
That one so gentle, fair and kind,
Should bear a name that brings to mind
The Indian in his fiercest mood,
The wild beast of the desert wood.
Unsuited name! You are no more Savage
Than Micraefellse is a cabbage.
All changes are not for the best,
But you'd do well to make it *West*.

July, 1862.

The Smiles of Providence.

THE smiles of Providence are seen
In fruitful seasons, meadows green—
In sunshine and the gentle shower,
At noonday and the midnight hour;
In limpid streams that rush and leap
O'er mountain side and rugged steep;
In placid lakes that seem to sleep,
In creeks that through the valleys creep,
In harvest fields and forests.

August, 1862.

War.

G RIM-VISAGED war, with blood-shot eyes,
With iron heels, of brass his thighs,
With brazen forehead, arms of steel,
With heart of stone too cold to feel,
With nerves of wire, granite head,
His tears of joy are melted lead.

Shall Woman Vote?

SHE needs to cast but a single vote
In all her life's extent;
And that should be a silent vote;
'Tis silence gives consent.

And then the man that gets that vote
Is a happier mother's son
Than he who gets ten thousand votes,
And is sent to Washington.

Sir Francis Drake.

THE guilty parents never married,
The helpless babe is often carried,
In a basket covered o'er,
To some childless mother's door;
There to remain till break of day,
To be received or sent away.
This has been done a thousand times
By those who would conceal their crimes.
A curious instance of the kind
In "Leonard's Legends" you may find,
Where, speaking of the English nuns,
In substance thus the story runs :

An infant was in London born,
Whose parents were unknown ;
The little stranger, soon one morn,
Was on the public thrown.

An orphan, though its parents lived,
The offspring of their shame ;
Defenceless, and without a home,
Alone, without a name.

Kind Sisters took the outcast in,
Its little wants supplied,
Or soon this little child of sin
Of hunger would have died.

The chilling wind, the winter's breath,
Blew cold late in December ;
Because he did not freeze to death,
The Sisters called him Ember.

Fit name for this, as bright a spark
As love e'er struck from shame ;
Though kindled in the guilty dark,
It burst into a flame—

A flame that could not be suppressed,
A burning shame and scandal ;
It never knew its mother's breast,
A mother worse than vandal.

No children of their own to bless,
For whom to watch and pray,
The Sisters sought the little ones
That others threw away.

In mind and body Ember grew,
Intelligent and strong ;
Was taught to keep the right in view,
And to avoid the wrong.

And by that name he went and came
Till he had grown quite stout ;
Then, not content with what it meant,
He put the Ember out ;

That is, he said unto the nuns,
 “A seaman I will make ;
And as you seem so fond of puns,
 I choose the name of Drake.”

One of the Irish Sisters said,
 “Your name is very fowl,
And yet it suits a seaman well,
 It does, upon my soul.

“And, Drake, when you are out at sea,
 In fight or stormy weather,
No ducking let there be with thee,
 Don’t show the coward feather.

“The patriot seaman freely braves
 The dangers of the sea,
The howling storm, the dashing waves,
 That roll triumphantly.

“His country has his heart and hand,
His home his thoughts and cares;
He serves his own, his native land,
No foreign foe he fears.

“With motives pure, and honor bright,
Your country to sustain,
You can, amidst the storm at night,
In truth and faith exclaim :

““Blow on, ye winds! ye thunders, roar!
Ye lightnings, streak the sky!
Ye waters, dash from shore to shore!
Ye waves, roll mountain high!

““I do not dread the Fates’ decree,
I know it will be just;
My country sent me out to sea,
So in the Fates I’ll trust.

“And yet, if Fortune think it right
To make the sea my grave,
I'll sink and drown this stormy night,
My country but to save.’

“Thus to your country freely give
Your hopes, all bright and high ;
Thus for your country bravely live,
And for it bravely die.”

This patriotic, brief address
Sank deep into his heart ;
Through life he felt it prompting him
To act the nobler part.

He went on board the man-of-war,
The little cabin boy,
To see, what very soon he saw,
What thrilled his heart with joy.

He saw old Ocean, deep and wide,
His waves with foaming crest ;
He saw the frigate proudly ride
Upon his heaving breast.

He saw the iceberg mountain high,
The white bear on its side,
As forcibly it drifted by,
The plaything of the tide.

He saw the storm in all its wrath,
And heard its mighty roar ;
He saw the sea without a path
To lead to any shore.

He saw the floating wrecks of ships,
All shattered on the shoals,
Which seemed to speak, though sealed their lips,
Of lost and ruined souls.

He saw the calm, when silence reigns
Supreme upon the deep,
When tired nature strength regains,
And Ocean seems asleep.

He saw the swallow skimming o'er
The surface of the sea,
The white gulls darting to and fro,
The sea birds wild and free.

He saw the serpent as it chased
The gliding ship along;
He saw the mermaid to her waist,
And heard her siren song.

He saw the porpoise and the shark
Close to the vessel keep,
The distant walrus and the whale,
Those monsters of the deep.

Indeed, he saw, on this first trip,
 Whatever eyes could see ;
He scanned each rope upon the ship,
 Each bolt and beam and key.

He closely watched each shifting sail,
 And learn its use and power ;
He saw the frigate, in a gale,
 Make twenty knots an hour.

His first ambition was to climb
 High up the towering mast ;
To be the first and richest man
 In England was his last.

He soon achieved his boyish wish,
 The acme of his hopes ;
It took him but a month or two
 At most to learn the ropes.

A sailor noticed little Drake,
And said to him in play,
“My little chap, sit on my lap;
What does a vessel weigh?”

“Its anchor,” was the quick reply;
“And if it weighed its men,
'Twould find that you, of all the crew,
Would weigh twelve score and ten.

“And yet you cannot tell, I'll bet
A half a pint of flip,
Why you are still the lightest man
Of all on board the ship.”

“I give it up,” the fat man said;
“How can you make out that?
I will not bet, but if you'll tell,
Then you can take my hat.”

The boy jumped from the sailor's lap,
And throwing on the deck his cap,
And taking from the sailor's head
His hat, thus to the sailor said :

“ Why, every man on shipboard can
 (Unless he comes from York)
The reason tell, at once and well,
 Yóu are a man of Cork.”

The Irish sailor saw the pun,
And, with the rest, enjoyed the fun,
And laughing till he shook each side,
To Drake's good hit he thus replied :

“ And faith, and by St. George! I think
 This boy deserves the hat ;
If he be right I'll never sink ;
 I thank him much for that.”

This wit of Drake's made him a pet
Among the jolly crew ;
About the frigate and the sea
They told him all they knew.

Three voyages more he made to sea
On board the man-of-war ;
Then, being twenty-one, was free,
According to the law.

Nine years of service well improved
Were quite enough, indeed,
To make proficient any one
Determined to succeed.

So was his purpose early fixed,
It never grew the less ;
Defeat or failure never mixed
With his prolonged success.

The weary voyage at an end,
The sea-worn ship arrived,
Each sailor went to see what friend,
What relative survived.

With grateful heart for kindness done,
With soul subdued and mild,
Our sailor to the Convent went
Just like a little child,

To see the noble Sisters three,
To offer them his thanks,
To offer, too, for charity,
A purse well filled with francs.

Two of the Sisters that were there
When he first went to sea
No longer knelt on earth in prayer,
In heaven they bent the knee

Before that God who saw their deeds
Of charity and love ;
That God, who knows no sects nor creeds,
Had welcomed them above.

But one remained, and she was old,
Infirm and very blind ;
Yet to the hardy seaman bold
She still was very kind.

She took the sailor's offered hand,
His voice she did remember,
And then said she, "Oh, can this be
The velvet hand of Ember ?

"But never mind about the hand,
The heart's the great concern ;
Let that be soft, and very oft
With heavenly fire burn."

Though blind, she saw that fame and wealth
By Drake were greatly prized ;
She counselled him about his health,
In morals thus advised :

“The world is full of vain deceit,
And promises each day
Its pleasures to the thoughtless crowd
Who'll follow in its way.

“One day departs, another comes,
The promise is renewed ;
The pleasures, still unrealized,
With vigor are pursued.

“The miser thinks that heaps of gold
Will solid comfort give,
And so resolves within his soul
For wealth alone to live.

“Poor wretch, indeed! unmindful he
Of what the Scriptures say,
That riches have their golden wings
With which to fly away.

“Ambition leads the courtier up
The slippery steep of fame,
Upon whose summit he would stand
To tell the world his name.

“Some stumble at the very base
And sink beneath the mire,
While others, better guided, reach
A point a little higher.

“Yet, not content, they still ascend,
Besmeared with mud and weary,
And as they tread the higher ground,
They find that all is dreary.

“The very apex almost gained,
A single step required,
But that misplaced, alas! they fall,
And sink with those that mired.

“The simple girl expects to find
Her greatest bliss in praises;
In splendid dress and equipage,
The dance’s giddy mazes.

“With beating heart and open ear
She’ll listen, night and day,
To fulsome praise and compliment,
To what admirers say.

“She hears a thousand handsome things
Said of her to her face;
Dissatisfied! for still there is
Within an aching space.

“And so the world deceives them all ;
 Its pleasures fly away
Like summer clouds before the wind,
 Or dew at opening day.

“True pleasures can alone be found
 In duties well performed ;
These make a breastwork high and strong,
 That never can be stormed.

“And then it matters not so much
 What our duties are ;
If we discharge them faithfully,
 The honor lieth there.”

The aged Sister said no more,
 The hour for mass had come ;
Drake led her to the chapel door
 In silence ; he was dumb—

His heart was full, but not a word
Of thanks could he express ;
Could he have uttered what he felt,
His grief would have been less.

With quivering lip and trembling hand
He bade his friend farewell ;
How much he thanked her both well knew,
Although he could not tell.

She entered ; he remained awhile
Just at the chapel door ;
He saw her totter up the aisle,
He saw his friend no more.

That friend, who, in his infancy,
Supplied the mother's place ;
That Sister, in the truest sense,
Of all the human race.

With that kind friend, that Sister dear,
He now had taken leave ;
He wiped away the manly tear
Upon his flannel sleeve.

He cherished, in his heart of hearts,
The lesson he had heard,
Remembered its substantial parts,
And nearly every word.

No man in all the British realm,
Then mistress of the sea,
Was better fitted for the helm
Of man-of-war than he.

The helm was placed within his hands,
The sailor-boy no more,
But Captain in a high command,
And soon a Commodore.

The risks and dangers of the main
He failed not to incur,
And for his services his Queen
Entitled him a Sir.

The history of Sir Francis Drake
To all the world is known ;
On Ember and his early life
But little light is thrown.

So we essay to brush away
The ashes from that spark,
Ordained to make on sea and lake
A bright and shining mark.





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